**FORCE READINESS COMMAND**

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**Mission:**
**Prepare the Workforce by providing**

- Clear Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
- Relevant Training
- Quality Assessments

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**



**Submit articles, pictures and story ideas to:**

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# FORCECOM NEWSLETTER

VOLUME II, ISSUE IV SEPTEMBER 2014

## FROM THE COMMANDER

The events of the past few months have reinforced the important role each of you plays in the missions of the Coast Guard and our nation. At the end of September, FORCECOM leaders—our division officers, Commanding Officers, and their senior staff—gathered in Yorktown for the Performance Readiness Leadership Summit, to share best practices across our organization and discuss the exciting course we're charting ahead to best prepare the CG workforce.

These past few weeks have also seen the Commandant's release of the new Western Hemisphere Engagement Strategy. This strategy requires important human performance, training, readiness, standardization, and TTP components, and our FORCECOM shipmates are working diligently in all these areas to help implement this critical strategy. In addition, we supported the nation's response to the Ebola virus by providing Health Services Technicians from our TRACENs to help screen airport travelers. I am proud of all of you for the many ways you are contributing every day to support our service's goals.


## FROM THE CMC

Wow – where did the summer go! Fall is here – and while some folks moved on to new units, we have welcomed a whole new group of people to FORCECOM. No matter what unit you are at, please make an extra effort to welcome them and help them get settled.

As we look ahead to the next several months, I would like to draw your attention to just a couple quick things. First, please read the Flag Voice about major changes coming to Direct Access – most importantly is the period 18 Dec – 5 Jan when no pay or personnel transactions will be available – even our YN will be without access. Second, many of you will travel at some point in the coming months – be safe, be smart, and be sure…nuff said!

Finally, the holidays can be a difficult time for some. Keep alert for your shipmates who might find this time of year difficult for some reason or another – and have the courage to ask if they need help, or, at a minimum, bring your concern up to their supervisor. We want and need you all back ready to tackle the exciting 2015 that is right around the corner…Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year!

## FORCECOM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 4th Quarter FY14, FORCECOM…

- Executed 9 exercises.
- Produced 8 new Tactics, Techniques, & Procedures documents.
- Conducted 227 assessments.
- Graduated 783 recruits.
- Convened
  - 34 A-School courses with 603 graduates
  - 344 C-school courses with 3,892 graduates
- Delivered 78 E-Learning Courses with 62,477 graduates.
- Provided $1.4M in Tuition Assistance, supporting 670 personnel, 2,761 courses, and 8,642 credit hours.

# Waterways Management Integrated Process Team Charting New Waters

**Ms. Mimi Boran, FC-Pp**

The Waterways Management Integrated Process Team recently gathered at TRACEN Yorktown to kick off the simultaneous development of a series of publications detailing tactics, techniques, and procedures for waterways management operations.

The Headquarters Waterways Policies and Activities Division, CG-WWM-1, initiated this process by requesting a front-end analysis from FORCECOM, to address perceived gaps in human performance within this mission area.

FORCECOM's Performance Analysis team provided a comprehensive, prioritized list of the major tasks and outputs within waterways management, and recommended solutions to improve workforce performance.

FORCECOM is now working to deliver TTP/job aids and training curriculum for waterways management field personnel. Once implemented, the mission requirements will be reinforced through FORCECOM audits and baseline assessment metrics, to show changes in performance over time.

The specific waterways management TTP publications will include

- Limited Access Areas and other control measures
- Dead Ship Movements
- Captain of the Port Orders
- Hazards to Navigation
- National Environmental Policy Act Compliance
- Navigation Risk Assessments
- Anchorages
- Marine Event Permitting

Over the next several months, the Integrated Process Team charged with developing the TTP will separate into workgroups to draft content for the publications. Following that, the TTP will be sent out for field validation to ensure accuracy for best practices, context, structure, language, and policy references.

Once complete, the new TTP will be published to the CGTTP library on CG Portal and officially promulgated via ALCOAST.

Bravo Zulu to the Waterways Management IPT for their commitment to improve Coast Guard mission performance through current, accurate, valid, and accessible TTP.

# EST supports EcoCanal 2014

**Mr. Michael Herring, Exercise Support Branch Portsmouth**

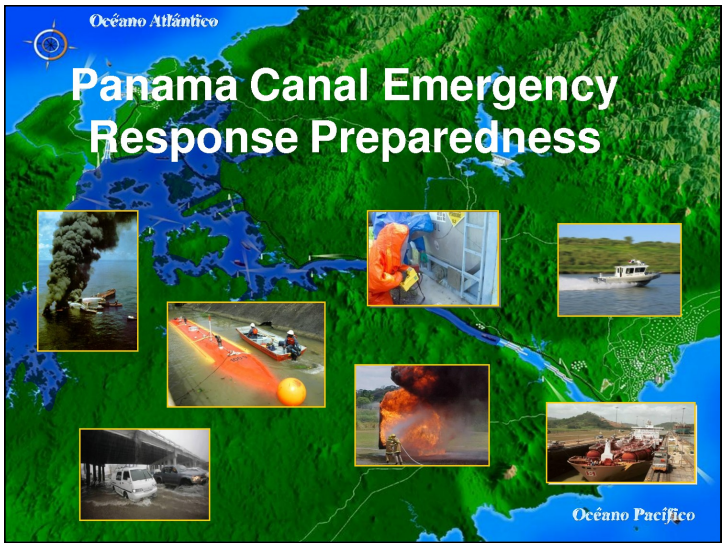
FORCECOM's Exercise Support Team 4 returned in August from the last of several trips to Panama to support the design and execution of the EcoCanal 2014 Functional Exercise. What is the EST doing in Panama, you may ask?

On January 1, 2000, the Republic of Panama and the Autoridad del Canal de Panama assumed control and operation of the Panama Canal from the United States. Following this, Panama and the United States signed a Memorandum of Agreement for the U.S. to provide support for certain environmental incidents in the Panama Canal Area.

As required by the MOA, the U.S. and Panama hold annual exercises to ensure continuity of communications, planning, and improvement of emergency response operations in the canal. The ACP and Panama's National Response Team requested FORCECOM's EST expertise to support the design and execution of the most recent exercise in this series, EcoCanal 2014.

This year's exercise was of particular interest to both the ACP and the NRT, as it was part of the year-long activities commemorating the 100-year anniversary of the canal's first transit on August 15, 1914. Additionally, this year's exercise included not only the ACP and NRT member agencies, but also numerous Panamanian response partners. The language barrier created a unique challenge to the EST, who overcame this by leading and facilitating the design process in both English and Spanish, with the aid of interpreters.

The exercise was a resounding success, building on regional and international partnerships. The EST enjoyed the unique challenge and opportunity of supporting both a global economic asset and a modern engineering wonder.



# MEC Mundy

# Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year

Routinely working 75-hour work weeks, 17 days straight? It's a result of the mission, says Petty Officer 1st Class Wesley Mundy, a reservist assigned to the Special Missions Training Center deployment training detachment. What is this mission? Preparing hundreds of Coast Guard men and women for their upcoming deployments.

Mundy, who lives in Maui, Hawaii, voluntarily accepted orders more than 5,000 miles from his family to share his passion for maritime law enforcement and ensure members of the service are ready for their new assignment.

As a maritime enforcement specialist, Mundy plays a critical role serving as the expeditionary warfare instructor, preparing hundreds of reservists for deployment to the Persian Gulf area of operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. He is a full-time instructor who has enabled nearly 700 students to become deployment ready in the last two years. In addition to teaching skills necessary for their upcoming deployment, Mundy also offers students his own personal deployment experiences, allowing them to gain insight into life overseas and prepare for their tour of duty. He routinely dedicates countless hours of his personal time to give students extra training in military tactics and Aikido and even organizes grueling physical training sessions for interested students.

"Mundy's positive attitude, devotion to duty and ubiquitous smile are positively infectious to other Special Mission Training Center instructors, support staff and students," said his supervisor, Chief Petty Officer Douglas Schneider.

Along with his primary instructor duties, Mundy also serves as a firearms instructor, law enforcement instructor and is the unit's first reservist water survival training master. Recognizing several students struggling with weapons systems, he volunteered extra range training, enabling them to build confidence and eventually earn a qualification on weapons systems necessary for deployment.

He takes it upon himself to improve procedures and streamline processes, enabling training to continue unhindered. He created an original weapons performance qualification standard presentation and range pre-firing brief for all firearms instructors, standardizing the process for weapons qualifications. Upon recognizing a necessity of an instructor development course for the Middle Eastern training team, he generated his own curriculum and delivered the innovative instructor course to all training team instructors.

Readying service members for overseas deployments isn't Mundy's only mission. In addition to his devotion to the maritime law enforcement mission, he has dedicated his personal time to helping others in need. He opens his home to members serving on temporary duty assignments in the area. When Hurricane Sandy ravaged the Gulf Coast, Mundy set up a donation drive to help those negatively affected and took leave to help rebuild lost homes.

"Petty Officer Mundy stands out not merely because of his extraordinary competence, but rather because of his unflinching loyalty to his shipmates, the service and the mission," added Schneider.

As a civilian, Mundy works with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement. As a field supervisor, Mundy coordinates resources and maritime law enforcement operations for a district on the island of Oahu.

Mundy's commitment to the maritime law enforcement mission, training and the Coast Guard's core values resulted in his selection for Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year and, as a result, he was meritoriously advanced to chief petty officer.

"I am honored to have been selected as Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year," says Mundy. "I have been fortunate. There is no other way to say it. I am surrounded by stellar performers who are just as deserving, and in some cases, more deserving as I am."

Congratulations to Chief Petty Officer Mundy on this achievement!

*- by Lt. j.g. Katie Braynard, CG-092. Reprinted by permission.*

# Always Ready:

## Wildland Fire Partnerships

**Article by Fire Chief Charles Funkhouser and Mr. Steve Countouriotis, TRACEN Petaluma**

In a state as large and populated as California, no one emergency response agency can do it all: cooperative efforts between state, federal, and local agencies are essential in response to emergencies like wildland fires. This is the mission of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection - CAL FIRE.

While the primary mission for the TRACEN Petaluma Fire Department is structural fire protection for Coast Guard facilities, they are also a California strike team response capability, helping as needed to combat wildland fires.

This year's wildland fire season got off to an early start, and the number of fires to date this year is about 25% above normal.

On any given night in California, the news is often filled with reports of wildland fires burning throughout the state. To prepare for the front lines of this exhausting, dangerous seasonal battle, firefighters undergo considerable interagency training.


TRACEN Petaluma's Fire Department contributed to the preparations for this year's fire season by hosting a CAL FIRE helicopter training session in May 2014 for 41 firefighters, representing mutual aid partners from Marin County, Graton, Two Rock, Sonoma County Fire, and Valley Ford Fire Departments.

CAL FIRE uses UH-1 Huey helicopters for fast initial attack on wildland fires. The helicopters can deliver a 9-person fire crew wherever it's needed, and can also battle fires by dropping water or foam. The aircraft are used for medical evacuations, internal and external load transfer, infrared mapping of incidents, and numerous non-fire emergency missions.

CAL FIRE helicopter crews are highly-trained for short-haul rescues, in which a crew member is lowered from a hovering helicopter to assist an injured or trapped person below.

During Petaluma's May training session, firefighters practiced how to sequence and shuttle to and from fire lines. They demonstrated hoisting capabilities, and lifted three loads of water from the TRACEN Petaluma lake to practice bucket drops.

With 830 acres under their care at TRACEN Petaluma, the TRACEN's Fire Department depends on its local partners as much as they depend on the TRACEN. The TRACEN's Fire Department responded to 19 wildland/vegetation fires in the local area this past year, and remains "Always Ready" to help battle such devastating blazes alongside its CAL FIRE partners.

PETALUMA, Calif.—(Top) A CAL FIRE helicopter demonstrates firefighting techniques during a training session, May 10, 2014. (Lower left) Firefighters from CAL FIRE review proper safety and hoisting procedures as part of a joint wildland fire training exercise, May 10, 2014. (U.S. Coast Guard photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jonathan Ptak)

# ETs go hands-on at TRACEN Petaluma

**Based on an article by Lt. Alan Sease and Mr. Mike Coughlin, C4ITSC**

The most technologically advanced patrol boat in the fleet, the Fast Response Cutter, now has a fully-functional mockup at Training Center Petaluma, to help both shipboard and shore-based electronics technicians gain functional expertise with the FRC's complex C4ISR systems.

The mockup is an exact replica of all the electronics found on the FRC, including electrical cords and trunks running behind equipment and under deckplates. The only missing piece is the ship's pitch and roll!

Electronics Technician First Class Samuel Gerszeweski and Electronics Technician Second Class Desirée Gibbs installed the pilothouse console and space equipment racks to the exact dimensions and specifications of an FRC. In fact, the training mockup is designated "Hull Zero," or "WPC-1100," so that every upgrade for the fleet will come to the training center first, securing long-term resource support through the Surface Forces Logistics Center's Patrol Boat Product Line, and ensuring students will continue to receive cutting-edge instruction.

"The layout is designed so all students can get involved," said Electronics Technician Chief Andy Goldsmith, part of the TRACEN's C4ISR school staff. While the mockup is the exact replica of an FRC, the size of the training room gives students plenty of room to move around. Small class size ensures each student can see systems clearly and receive plenty of personalized instruction, critical to familiarization with these complex systems.

"The students are ETs, but when you open the cover here, you see most of these systems rely on a computer network," said Gerszewski. "We have to teach the students how to troubleshoot from more of the IT side as well." Understanding signal flow is critical; a simple misconfigured data port can result in a confusing and disabling problem for the operator.

The performance-based course emphasizes hands-on troubleshooting, using problems reported from the field. Students complete the course with an average of 82 repair hours. After students complete an exhausting series of real-world troubleshooting scenarios, they are encouraged to stump instructors with their own mock casualties.

"We've learned a lot that way," said Gerszewski.

**COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE**

The mockup was the result of over two years of collaboration between the FRC Acquisition Project (CG-9324), the SFLC Patrol Boat Product Line, L-3 Communications Systems-East, and the C4ITSC's RF Communications Core Technology. All of the actual assembly and wiring of the equipment was conducted by TRACEN C4ISR school staff.

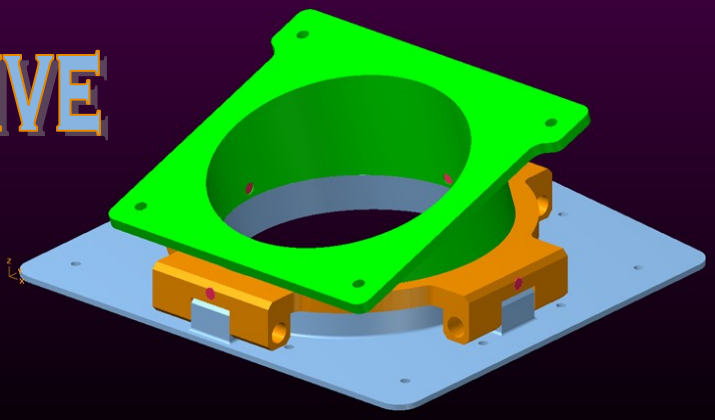
In late June, the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard honored Gerszewski and Gibbs for their instrumental work in creating this highly realistic training environment. Their accomplishments included verifying and correcting over 800 pages of wiring diagrams and installation documentation; fabricating the mounting structures and installing over a mile of cable and hundreds of connectors; and developing job aids and curriculum for students and field technicians.

"I'm so pleased to see this training mockup, as it will serve for decades to come," said Captain David Dermanelian, Commander, C4IT Service Center. "Arming our technicians with knowledge by running them through the troubleshooting scenarios will directly support Coast Guard mission execution."

PETALUMA, Calif..—Instructors from the TRACEN's C4ISR school staff—Petty Officer First Class Chris Prior, Petty Officer Second Class Desiree Gibbs, and Petty Officer First Class Samuel Gerszewski—pose in front of fully-functioning Fast Response Cutter electronics used to train technicians. (U.S. Coast Guard photos by Lt. Heather Bacon-Shone)

# PATENTLY INNOVATIVE

## Design team receives U.S. patent for creative solution



*By Lt. Heather Bacon-Shone, FORCECOM External Affairs*

Coasties are always coming up with innovative ways to solve the service's challenges. But it's not every day that a group of young junior officers—and their former cadet advisor—finds themselves U.S. Patent holders for their invention.

In 2011, for their senior-year capstone project, four Coast Guard Academy cadets majoring in mechanical engineering – Alex Brown, Tom Morrow, Trent Meyers, and Katie Spira – took on the flare tube launcher challenge. The Casa HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane uses a flare tube launching system that drops a flare with the push of a button – extremely useful for marking positions during search and rescue operations.

But the existing design was flawed. The single-piece tube and base had to be removed in order to reconfigure the aircraft for other missions, which often happened two or three times a day. The expensive tube system was prone to damage during the complex, time-consuming removal process, which took over forty minutes and required a number of different tools. With operations demanding rapid and reliable reconfiguration of the aircraft, the current system was calling out for improvement.

The capstone project grew out of a summer cadet internship at Aviation Logistics Center. As it happened, the topic was a great fit for the cadets' capstone advisor, then-CDR Chip Hatfield, an aeronautical engineer and at the time, the Academy's Civil Engineering Section Chief.

To solve the problem, the team went straight to the front lines. "The first phase of our design process was to clearly identify the concerns of the operators and maintenance crews," said Spira. They learned that the tube had to be removed in order to slide pallets of gear on and off the plane. All of the potential designs thus incorporated the idea that the tube needed to be detachable, secured to a base that was low enough to the deck that the pallet could slide right over it.

The team brainstormed various solutions, always keeping the operators front and center in the project. "By constantly checking our design concepts with the maintenance technicians and the fabricators," said Spira, "we never steered too far off course of the practical. You can have a great design that looks nice and is easy to produce, but meets none of the needs of the customer. By being in constant communication with our "consumer," we were able to produce a better and more effective product."

By far, said Spira, the best part of the design process was being able to travel to various air stations and talk to maintenance technicians and production crews.

*The cadet project team during the design and testing phase.*

At one point, we had four separate teams in one room, she said: the maintenance crews who worked on and serviced the flare tube; the computer design and fabrication team; the command cadre; and our cadet senior design team. Each group had vital feedback that greatly contributed to the design's success. The maintenance technicians suggested developing a 'key' to the design; for instance, making one quick-release pin larger than the others, so it could only be installed one way. The computer design and fabrication team had several recommendations that would drastically reduce the time to draw the design in the computer and fabricate it, cutting the prototype cost in half. The command cadre made suggestions for material selection, based on their previous experiences. We incorporated

all these outstanding points in some form or fashion into our final design. Without this meeting and the support of the aviation community, we could not have been as successful with this project.

The group also intentionally designed failure into their invention. Materials fatigue over time and when exposed to excessive stresses – failure at some point is certain, so the group intentionally picked the safest and most cost-effective weak link: the pins. We designed the base to be stronger than the quick release pins, said Spira, ensuring that the first failure would be in the cheapest part of our design.

That's not to say the design is flimsy. The group's prototype exceeded stresses that were 1.8 times the designed failure strength, even after incorporating several safety factors. "We realized that even in a worst-case scenario like a crash, the flare tube would not break free," said Spira.

As the cadets graduated and started careers throughout the Coast Guard – Meyers and Morrow are at flight school, Brown is a naval engineer, and Spira serves afloat – CAPT Hatfield worked closely with the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology office to patent the team's invention. Lavanya "Elle" Ratnam, the Assistant General Counsel for Intellectual Property at the DHS Office of General Counsel, guided Hatfield through the process of filing a government patent. "It took a lot of persistence, but Ms. Ratnam was a champion for our patent," said Hatfield.

In May 2014, after a very lengthy process, the U.S. Patent and Trademark office issued a Notice of Allowance, granting the patent to the five-member Coast Guard team. The patent "demonstrates a successful collaboration between DHS Science & Technology and the Coast Guard, that has worldwide applications," said Ratnam. The S&T Technology Transfer Office will now help transfer and commercialize the technology.

The invention is being adopted by ALC for use in the Coast Guard's HC-144 fleet. Hatfield estimates the device will save approximately 16-24 labor hours per month, per plane, and millions of dollars in fuel and maintenance costs.

Hatfield encourages others with innovative ideas to test their solutions. "Every year, the cadets in the engineering department at the Academy are looking for ideas for the fleet on projects for senior capstone design." While he points out that not all projects have merit for fleet implementation, ideas that are unique, useful, and proven to work should be considered for a U.S. Patent.

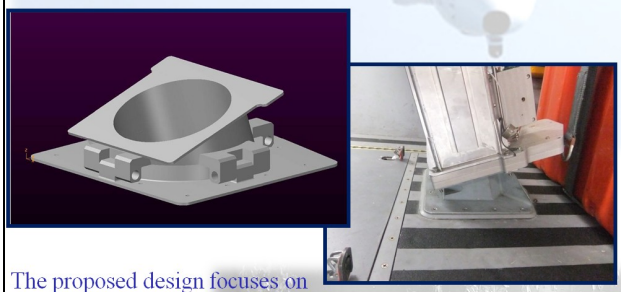
Spira, now the commanding officer of the 87-foot patrol boat Haddock, found the experience useful to many other aspects of her career. I've used a similar 'design process' many times since receiving my commission, she said. "Instead of using it to work with a product, however, I use it to work with people. Before making decisions or going down a particular course of action, I pull more people with different areas and levels of expertise into the decision-making process."

Bravo Zulu to the inventors for a job well done!

## CASA HC-144 FLARE TUBE MODIFICATION

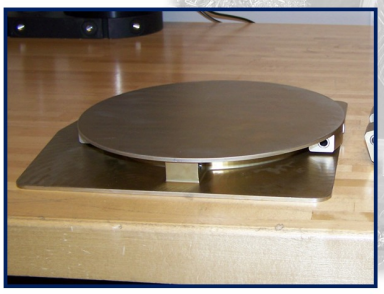
*from the team's presentation at the Cadet Research Symposium*

Current flare tube system. Fasteners are in difficult locations and are often damaged when removing.



The proposed design focuses on redesigning the base mount for the flare tube launcher. It is dimensionally the same as the existing part (right), but is separated into two parts for quick removal (left). Four (4) quick release pins will secure the two halves.

A cover plate was designed such that the aircraft can be operated without a flare tube if desired. The plate has structural bracing on the underside for rigidity.



With the upper mount and flare tube removed and cover plate in place, there is clearance for the mission pallet to slide on the rollers without fully removing the mount.

The entire mount was made from 3 pieces of solid 7075 billet aluminum on a CNC mill at ALC. The first completed prototype can be seen on the right.

# ASK FORCECOM!

Lt. Alisa Uzoaru, Mr. Eugene Kentch, Mr. Damon Sanders,
Mr. Mike Steele, and Ms. Nora Gomez, FORCECOM Exercise Support
Interview conducted by Lt. Heather Bacon-Shone

The oil spread quickly, threatening Lake Erie, Toledo's key source of municipal water, just as the city was still reeling from a recent toxic algal bloom that had left nearly half a million residents without drinking water. But over 400 trained professionals, representing a wide range of government, industry, and private stakeholders, were ready to spring into coordinated response action.

The scenario for this year's MSU Toledo Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) full-scale exercise was based on the allision of a tank barge with a submerged object, creating a "worst-case" discharge scenario within the Port of Toledo and Maumee Bay and endangering the port's environmentally sensitive areas. Every Sector in the Coast Guard practices how it will respond to an oil spill. But the size and scope envisioned for this particular full-scale exercise were large enough that Sector Detroit requested assistance from FORCECOM's Exercise Support Team.

Thanks to careful and integrated advance planning, the exercise ran smoothly. Responders collaborated effectively to stop the simulated spill before it entered the municipal water supply, and minimized the impact on the environment, protecting local wildlife. On the first day of exercise play, response organizations practiced deploying boom in the river, even demonstrating use of a special device that takes advantage of fluid dynamics to self-propel upstream, containing a spill more effectively than traditional, labor-intensive methods.

Following the successful event, members of FORCECOM's Exercise Support Team took a few minutes to answer questions about their roles.

**Q: How are exercises selected for FORCECOM support?**

**A**: *A request usually comes from the operational unit. Units request support when the size and scope of the exercise exceed their local ability, or when they would like more expertise and experience to assist their planning staff. Requests flow through the operational chain of command and are prioritized based on exercise type, level (table-top or full-scale), prior support, availability of other support elements, funding, and timing. Currently, FORCECOM's Exercise Support Division supports about 35-50 exercises every year, or three per team per year.*

**Q: What experience/quals do EST members bring?**

**A**: *All EST members have completed PQS certifying them to perform as Control Coordinator, Evaluation Coordinator, and Team Leader; many members have achieved the advanced certification of Master Exercise Practitioner. Formal training requirements include Team Leader/Facilitator; Basic Preparedness and Exercise; Advanced Preparedness and Exercise; and FEMA's Master Exercise Preparedness Program. Team members often have extensive experience in the areas exercised.*

**Q: How much of each exercise is customer-driven?**

**A**: *The exercise is developed to meet the needs of the customer: the unit. The unit owns the exercise, and the EST provides logistical and technical support. The EST starts by working with the unit to help them develop exercise concepts and objectives. Other agencies are also invited to the unit's exercise design team. ESTs provide suggestions to the unit's exercise design team based on the EST's training and experience, but the unit is the ultimate decision-maker for the exercise. The successful achievement of the unit's goals is what drives the EST.*

**Q: How does the EST incorporate real-world and exercise lessons learned?**

**A**: *As part of the exercise design process, the EST researches the database of lessons learned in the Contingency Preparedness System to see which ones can be incorporated into the exercise. Real-world events such as weather storm tracks, criminal activity, terrorist threats, public health concerns, and/or political tensions are used to enhance the plausibility of the exercise scenario. The goal is to provide participants with a realistic scenario supporting the stated exercise objectives.*

**Q: What is the typical team composition?**

**A**: *ESTs are normally composed of two team members and a Team Leader. Some teams are combined civilian and military, and some are entirely civilian. Currently, no reserve personnel are assigned to ESTs. For larger exercises, an EST is augmented by personnel drawn from other teams. For the Toledo exercise, the assigned EST was as-*

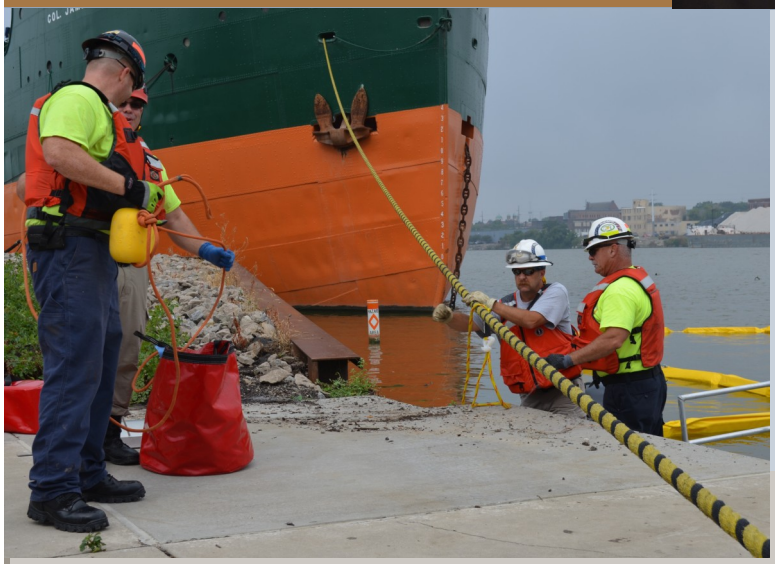
*sisted by members from a second EST, who helped run the simulation cell.*

**Q: What value does the EST bring to an exercise?**

**A**: *At a basic level, the EST is a valuable force multiplier for the unit: an average exercise can take more than 400 hours to develop and execute, and complex full-scale operational exercises, much more. More importantly, the EST is a conduit for best practices and lessons learned, and helps standardize the exercise planning process across the Coast Guard. Additionally, the EST brings significant expertise and professional training to the process, and serves as a useful source of knowledge to clarify exercise-related questions and concerns.*

**Q: What value is there to having the team conduct on-site, in-person exercise development and execution?**

**A**: *Meeting face-to-face for planning meetings is invaluable to the success of the exercise. An exercise is as much about building trust and cooperation among stakeholders as it is about the actual steps of the response. In order to build a solid working relationship between the unit, the exercise planning team, and the various port partners, meeting in person is absolutely crucial. Sometimes the EST works with a unit planner who's never run an exercise before. The EST takes the planner under their wing, mentoring and coaching them to success. A lot of that teaching environment occurs after hours, informally. Being on-site for the planning process is integral to building the strong relationships necessary for a successful exercise.*



**Q: How does the EST interact with the strike teams, IMATs, and other subject-matter experts?**

**A**: *Operational exercises can be very complicated, requiring an in-depth pool of knowledge and subject-matter expertise from the wide variety of roles and disciplines involved in a multi-agency response such as an oil spill or a security incident. For this reason, we rely heavily on the Strike Teams, IMATs, and local SMEs to provide that pool of knowledge, training, and education. These personnel often serve alongside our team as evaluators, coaches, Simulation Cell role players, and exercise controllers.*

**Q: Why doesn't the EST support every exercise?**

**A**: *Not all exercises require external support; some can be handled at the unit level. Funding, timing of the exercises, travel ceilings, and number of ESTs (there are currently nine) all limit the number of exercises that FORCECOM can support. We work with the operational commanders to prioritize FORCECOM's exercise support in order to make best use of limited resources.*

**Q: What is the most interesting part of the EST job?**

**A**: *I really enjoy the variety of situations and contingencies we focus on. The units have so many responsibilities, and it's an extraordinary privilege to help them achieve their goals. Our part may seem small—to examine a plan, develop a situation to test it, analyze the data, and facilitate the after-action report—but it is an important part to play. The plans we help test and validate protect the environment, improve security measures, and keep people safe. Reminding myself of this is what makes going to work easy!*

TOLEDO, Ohio—(Top left) A coach from the Public Information Assist Team assists an exercise participant with developing more effective communication products, Aug. 13, 2014. (Center) Damon Sanders, EST member, discusses conduct of the exercise with fellow controllers from the local fire department and industry stakeholder BP, Aug. 13, 2014. (Lower left and previous page) Contracted response personnel practice boom operations in the Maumee River, Aug. 12, 2014. (U.S. Coast Guard photos by Lt. Heather Bacon-Shone)

# Around FORCECOM

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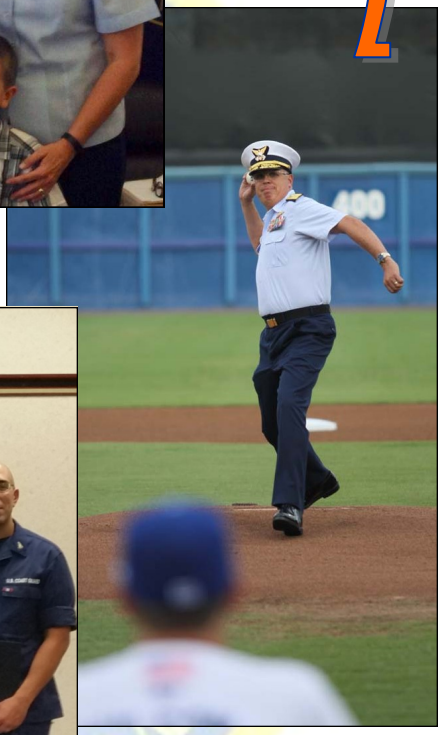

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## Around FORCECOM Captions

Clockwise from top center:

(1) PETALUMA, Calif.—Lt. Mart Pizana, Asst. Comptroller, TRACEN Petaluma, is flanked by his sons as he receives the Navy League (Pacific Central Region) Junior Officer of the Year for Mission Support Award from Master Chief Petty Officer Dawn Stephens, the District 11 Command Master Chief. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

(2) NORFOLK, Va.—Rear Adm. Scott Buschman, FORCECOM Commander, throws out the first pitch at a Norfolk Tides game on Coast Guard Day, Aug. 4, 2014. (Norfolk Tides photo)

(3) CHESAPEAKE, Va.—Members of FORCECOM's Finance & Assessment teams receive a Meritorious Team Commendation from Capt. Joanna Nunan, FORCECOM Chief of Staff, Aug. 19, 2014, for implementing a Virtual Inspection program. The initiative repurposed existing resources and technology in innovative new ways to maintain assessment standards for 100 small units, while saving approximately $100K in FY14 travel funding. (U.S. Coast Guard photo/Chief Petty Officer Stacey Winborne)

(4) WASHINGTON, D.C.—Petty Officer 3rd Class Supriya Chowdhury, then a student at TRACEN Petaluma, helps put finishing touches on a chocolate-and-wax model of the EAGLE for the Commandant's Change of Command. A team of Petaluma Food Specialists—Master Chief Petty Officer Justin Reed, Chief Petty Officer Scott Manfre, Chief Petty Officer Matthew Simolon, and Chowdhury—assisted with culinary preparations for the ceremony. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

(5) PETALUMA, Calif.—Training Center personnel and local active-duty members helped the Coast Guard Auxiliary celebrate its 75th birthday, June 23, 2014. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

PUBLICATION LINKS

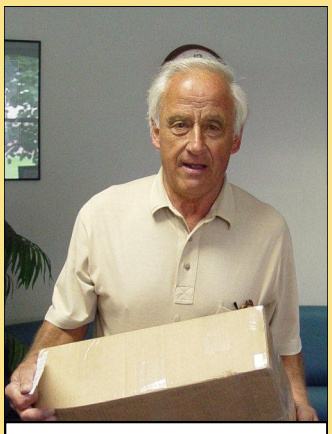
The following FORCECOM-related articles were published this quarter. (Click on the blue text to follow the link.)

- BM1 Dylan Skidmore, SMTC instructor, explains the unit's support to Tradewinds 2014 in this video.
- TRACEN Petaluma's new Fast Response Cutter bridge mock-up for electronics technician training is up and running!
- An article about PCO/PXO school at the LDC, in the July 2014 US Naval Institute Proceedings (no link; behind paywall)
- GM1 Mark Seal was honored as a GEICO Military Service Award winner for his work in traffic safety and accident prevention.
- AN Jose Iglesia, a student in AET "A" School at ATTC Elizabeth City and a recent gold-medal winner for Team USA in karate
- Coverage of the New Jersey Lt. Governor's visit to TRACEN Cape May in August.
- Kris Kristofferson attended his son's boot camp graduation at TRACEN Cape May in August.
- The *Press of Atlantic City* covers TRACEN Cape May's efforts to incorporate sound nutritional practices for recruits.
- Lots of great coverage of how ATTC made a little boy's "Make-A-Wish" dreams come true: here, here, here, and here.
- Link to ATC Mobile's new "Ship-Helo Newsletter" here.
- Post on the All-Hands Blog by PACM Alholm about the new ASVAB waiver process.
- FORCECOM's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and 2013 Annual Report
- FORCECOM's Ombudsman family newsletters for July, August, and September.
- "Shape the Future" posts on the Coast Guard's All-Hands blog featuring IT1 Neil Garrand and OS1 Korey Keefauver (both TRACEN Petaluma), SKCM George Bou (former TRACEN Cape May Company Commander and FSAT member; now the SK RFMC), OS1 Melissa Mathis, SK2 Nicholas Saporito, and ET1 R.F. Williams (all TRACEN Cape May)

Please note, inclusion of a link to an external publication does not imply official endorsement by FORCECOM or the U.S. Coast Guard.

# TRACEN Petaluma Honors Long-Time Civilian Employee

On September 2, 2014, the Coast Guard lost its longest currently-serving civilian employee, when Mr. Don Thomas, 85, passed away following 50 consecutive years of service at Training Center Petaluma.



Mr. Don Thomas

After serving two years in the Army during the Korean War, Mr. Thomas began working at the Army's Two Rock Ranch Station in 1964; then stayed at the facility as it transferred to the Coast Guard to become a training center seven years later.

During his lengthy federal career, Mr. Thomas worked in numerous capacities. After adapting to Coast Guard service, he served for the last 33 years as a forklift operator within the TRACEN's finance division.

PETALUMA, Calif.—Petty Officer 1st Class Justin Fortenberry, TRACEN Petaluma Honor Guard, presents the American flag to the nieces of Mr. Don Thomas. This flag was flown at half mast on Sept. 10, 2014, in honor of Mr. Thomas's contribution to the nation. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Munoz)

Mr. Thomas was a reserved man who spoke little about his life. He demonstrated unflagging work ethic and was an inspiration to the many storekeepers working alongside him, and the many customers he served.

Mr. Thomas was "the artery through which the Training Center's lifeblood flowed," said Retired Coast Guard Master Chief Petty Officer Rick Mercurio.

Mr. Antonio Lapaz, TRACEN Petaluma's Materials Expediter and a colleague of Mr. Thomas since 1986, remembered him as "that type of person who had customer service in mind."

Mr. Thomas's dedication to the TRACEN and his shipmates was unparalleled. His impact on the property and all of the people with whom he served throughout his 50-year career is far greater than can be described.

He will be missed.

SERVICE TO NATION

**by Lt. Erin Chlum, TRACEN Petaluma**